

CARE, MAINTENANCE, AND IMPROVEMENT OF ZACHARY TAYLOR MEMORIAL GROUNDS

JANUARY 30, 1925.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. GILBERT, from the Committee on the Library, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 9724]

The Committee on the Library, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 9724) to authorize an appropriation for the care, maintenance, and improvement of the burial grounds containing the remains of Zachary Taylor, former President of the United States, having considered the same, report thereon with the recommendation that it do pass, with the following amendments:

On page 1, strike out certain words and figures, and insert certain figures, as follows: At the close of line 3 strike out the word "each"; at the beginning of line 4, strike out the word "year"; in line 5 strike out the words "not to exceed", and the figures "\$1,000," and insert in lieu of said figures "\$10,000."

On page 2, after line 4, insert a new section as follows:

SEC. 2. That the Secretary of War be, and he is hereby, authorized to accept, free of cost to the United States Government, from the State of Kentucky, and from any others having authority to convey same, the land comprising the aforesaid burial grounds; and upon the presentation of good and perfect title to said land the Secretary of War is authorized and directed to establish thereon a national cemetery.

Amend the title, so that same shall read as follows:

A bill to authorize an appropriation for the care, maintenance, and improvement of the burial grounds containing the remains of Zachary Taylor, former President of the United States, and of the memorial shaft erected to his memory, and for other purposes.

Some of the reasons prompting the committee in making this report, together with a statement concerning the amendments proposed, follow:

Zachary Taylor was the twelfth President of the United States. He was born in Virginia, passed his early life in Kentucky, and then

spent 40 years as a soldier in the service of his country. In the War of 1812, in the frontier and Indian wars, and particularly in the Mexican War, his services stamped him as one of the most skilled and courageous military leaders that the Republic has ever produced, and his readiness to fight at all times and under all conditions won for him during his brilliant and successful campaigns in Mexico, the popular name of "Old Rough and Ready." As a popular hero he was elected to the Presidency in 1848, and served as President from March 4, 1849, until his death, which occurred on July 9, 1850.

His remains, first interred in a Washington cemetery, were shortly afterwards, because of a desire expressed by him before his death, removed to Kentucky and reinterred there in burial grounds constituting a portion of the old Zachary Taylor homestead, in Jefferson County, near Louisville. Afterwards the homestead passed out of the possession of the Taylor family, and the State of Kentucky acquired title to that portion of the burial grounds containing the remains of President Taylor and erected thereon a shaft to his memory. The grounds comprise something like 5 acres. During the three-quarters of a century which have elapsed since the remains of this distinguished patriot-soldier-President were consigned to their final resting place in Kentucky, the National Government has never expended a dollar in the care, maintenance, and improvement of these grounds. The State of Kentucky some years ago acquired title to a portion of the grounds and erected thereon an appropriate shaft or monument in honor of General Taylor, but has never made any provision for the care, maintenance, or improvement of the grounds, and public-spirited men and women of Louisville and Jefferson County have done what they could to care for and maintain the grounds and the approaches thereto. However, a larger expenditure of money is now needed to place and maintain these grounds in appropriate condition. Moreover, in the opinion of the committee, it is the duty of the National Government to make suitable provision for these matters; and it is rather unfortunate that the National Government has seemed to neglect for so long a time its duty in this regard.

The committee believes that the sum of \$10,000 will be needed for the purpose of putting the grounds in proper condition and in erecting proper gateways and entrances to the grounds, and in properly restoring the vault containing the remains of General Taylor. This vault is in a condition of serious decay and should be reconstructed. The indicated appropriation will also be sufficient to maintain the grounds temporarily and until title to the grounds may be conveyed to the United States Government. In the opinion of the committee it will be best to make the indicated appropriation in lump-sum form for the indicated purposes, and further to provide in the bill that when title to these grounds shall be made to the United States Government, without cost to it, the Secretary of War shall thereupon establish the grounds as a national cemetery to be thenceforth maintained as such. For these reasons the bill has been amended, changing its original terms providing for an annual appropriation of \$1,000 a year, and substituting therefor a lump-sum appropriation of \$10,000; and by an added section authorizing the acceptance of the grounds by the United States Government, with-

out cost to it, and the establishment thereon of a national cemetery. The whole of the \$10,000 is to be used for care, maintenance, and improvement purposes.

While the State of Kentucky has indicated its public spirit by erecting an appropriate granite monument on these grounds, it is apparently believed that the National Government also has an obligation to perform, and our advices are to the effect that the State authorities will be glad to arrange, through appropriate procedure, when the next general assembly meets—that is to say, in 1926—for the cession or conveyance to the United States Government of its title to these grounds upon the condition that the present bill, as amended, shall become a law. The provisions of section 2 of the bill are framed so as to permit conveyance of the title to the United States Government by the State of Kentucky, and by any authorized representatives of the State or others, who, because of any claim or interest in these grounds, may be necessary parties in the making of such conveyance.

We find appropriate precedents for the enactment of this bill. Congress has in many instances appropriated moneys and authorized the erection of statues, memorials, and monuments to distinguished sons of the Republic on privately owned grounds and in public cemeteries. Particular reference is made to the act of June 12, 1906 (34 Stat. 259), whereby Congress, in a procedure similar to that indicated in section 2 of the bill, authorized the Secretary of War to accept title to the lands, about 15 acres, in Greene County, Tenn., constituting the burial grounds of former President Andrew Johnson, and under that act, those burial grounds have become a national cemetery and are maintained as such.

In conclusion we desire to say that in our judgment every consideration of patriotism and national obligation favors the prompt enactment of this bill.



